

IN THE UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT  
FOR THE WESTERN DISTRICT OF TEXAS  
SAN ANTONIO DIVISION

NICHOLAS DeFOSSET,	)	
	)	
Plaintiff,	)	
	)	CIVIL ACTION
vs.	)	
	)	FILE No. 5:19-cv-527
SIMI'S RESTAURANT, INC.,	)	
and POINTNORTH HWY, LLC,	)	
	)	
Defendants.	)	

**COMPLAINT**

COMES NOW, NICHOLAS DeFOSSET, by and through the undersigned counsel, and files this, his Complaint against Defendants SIMI'S RESTAURANT, INC. and POINTNORTH HWY, LLC, pursuant to the Americans with Disabilities Act, 42 U.S.C. § 12181 *et seq.* ("ADA") and the ADA's Accessibility Guidelines, 28 C.F.R. Part 36 ("ADAAG"). In support thereof, Plaintiff respectfully shows this Court as follows:

**JURISDICTION**

1. This Court has original jurisdiction over the action pursuant to 28 U.S.C. §§ 1331 and 1343 for Plaintiff's claims pursuant to 42 U.S.C. § 12181 *et seq.*, based upon Defendants' failure to remove physical barriers to access and violations of Title III of the ADA.

**PARTIES**

2. Plaintiff NICHOLAS DeFOSSET (hereinafter "Plaintiff") is, and has been at all times relevant to the instant matter, a natural person residing in San Antonio, Texas

(Bexar County).

3. Plaintiff is disabled as defined by the ADA.

4. Plaintiff is required to traverse in a wheelchair and is substantially limited in performing one or more major life activities, including but not limited to: walking, standing, grabbing, grasping and/or pinching.

5. Plaintiff uses a wheelchair for mobility purposes.

6. Plaintiff is also an independent advocate of the rights of similarly situated disabled persons and is a “tester” for the purpose of asserting his civil rights, monitoring, ensuring, and determining whether places of public accommodation are in compliance with the ADA. His motivation to return to a location, in part, stems from a desire to utilize ADA litigation to make Plaintiff’s community more accessible for Plaintiff and others, and pledges to do whatever is necessary to create the requisite standing to confer jurisdiction upon this Court so an injunction can be issued correcting the numerous ADA violations on this Property, including returning to the Property as soon as it is accessible (“Advocacy Purposes”).”

7. Defendant SIMI’S RESTAURANT, INC. (hereinafter “SRI”) is a Domestic For Profit Corporation that transacts business in the state of Texas and within this judicial district.

8. SRI may be properly served with process via its registered agent for service, to wit: Priet Pal Sandu, 4535 Fredericksburg Road, #109, San Antonio, Texas 78201.

9. Defendant POINTNORTH HWY, LLC (hereinafter “Pointnorth”) is a

Texas limited liability company that transacts business in the state of Texas and within this judicial district.

10. Pointnorth may be properly served with process via its registered agent for service, to wit: Joe M. Kboudi, 7300 Blanco Road, San Antonio, Texas 78216.

### **FACTUAL ALLEGATIONS**

11. On or about February 7, 2019, Plaintiff was a customer at “Simi’s India Cuisine,” a business located at 4535 Fredericksburg Road, San Antonio, Texas 78201, referenced herein as “Simi’s.”

12. SRI is the lessee or sub-lessee of the real property and improvements that are the subject of this action.

13. Pointnorth is the owner or co-owner of the real property and improvements that the Simi’s is situated upon and that is the subject of this action, referenced herein as the “Property.”

14. Plaintiff lives approximately 8 miles from the Simi’s and Property.

15. Plaintiff’s access to the business(es) located at 4535 Fredericksburg Road, San Antonio, Bexar County Property Identification number 358085 (“the Property”), and/or full and equal enjoyment of the goods, services, foods, drinks, facilities, privileges, advantages and/or accommodations offered therein were denied and/or limited because of his disabilities, and he will be denied and/or limited in the future unless and until Defendant is compelled to remove the physical barriers to access and correct the ADA violations that exist at the Simi’s and Property, including those set forth in this Complaint.

16. Plaintiff has visited the Property at least once before as a customer and advocate for the disabled. Plaintiff intends on revisiting the Property within six months or sooner, as soon as the barriers to access detailed in this Complaint are removed and the Property is accessible again. The purpose of the revisit is to be a regular customer, to determine if and when the Property are made accessible and to maintain standing for this lawsuit for Advocacy Purposes.

17. Plaintiff intends to revisit the Simi's and Property to purchase goods and/or services.

18. Plaintiff travelled to the Simi's and Property as a customer and as an independent advocate for the disabled, encountered the barriers to access at the Simi's and Property that are detailed in this Complaint, engaged those barriers, suffered legal harm and legal injury, and will continue to suffer such harm and injury as a result of the illegal barriers to access present at the Simi's and Property.

**COUNT I**  
**VIOLATIONS OF THE ADA AND ADAAG**

19. On July 26, 1990, Congress enacted the Americans with Disabilities Act 42 U.S.C. § 12101 *et seq.*

20. Congress found, among other things, that:

- (i) some 43,000,000 Americans have one or more physical or mental disabilities, and this number is increasing as the population as a whole is growing older;
- (ii) historically, society has tended to isolate and segregate individuals with disabilities, and, despite some improvements, such forms of discrimination against individuals with disabilities continue to be a

serious and pervasive social problem;

- (iii) discrimination against individuals with disabilities persists in such critical areas as employment, housing public accommodations, education, transportation, communication, recreation, institutionalization, health services, voting, and access to public services;
- (iv) individuals with disabilities continually encounter various forms of discrimination, including outright intentional exclusion, the discriminatory effects of architectural, transportation, and communication barriers, overprotective rules and policies, failure to make modifications to existing facilities and practices, exclusionary qualification standards and criteria, segregation, and relegation to lesser service, programs, activities, benefits, jobs, or other opportunities; and
- (v) the continuing existence of unfair and unnecessary discrimination and prejudice denies people with disabilities the opportunity to compete on an equal basis and to pursue those opportunities for which our free society is justifiably famous, and costs the United States billions of dollars in unnecessary expenses resulting from dependency and non-productivity.

42 U.S.C. § 12101(a)(1) - (3), (5) and (9).

21. Congress explicitly stated that the purpose of the ADA was to:

- (i) provide a clear and comprehensive national mandate for the elimination of discrimination against individuals with disabilities;
- (ii) provide a clear, strong, consistent, enforceable standards addressing discrimination against individuals with disabilities; and

\* \* \* \* \*

- (iv) invoke the sweep of congressional authority, including the power to enforce the fourteenth amendment and to regulate commerce, in order to address the major areas of discrimination faced day-to-day by people with disabilities.

42 U.S.C. § 12101(b)(1)(2) and (4).

22. The congressional legislation provided places of public accommodation one and a half years from the enactment of the ADA to implement its requirements.

23. The effective date of Title III of the ADA was January 26, 1992 (or January 26, 1993 if a defendant has 10 or fewer employees and gross receipts of \$500,000 or less). 42 U.S.C. § 12181; 28 C.F.R. § 36.508(a).

24. The Simi's is a public accommodation and service establishment.

25. The Property is a public accommodation and service establishment.

26. Pursuant to the mandates of 42 U.S.C. § 12134(a), on July 26, 1991, the Department of Justice and Office of Attorney General promulgated federal regulations to implement the requirements of the ADA. 28 C.F.R. Part 36.

27. Public accommodations were required to conform to these regulations by January 26, 1992 (or by January 26, 1993 if a defendant has 10 or fewer employees and gross receipts of \$500,000 or less). 42 U.S.C. § 12181 *et seq.*; 28 C.F.R. § 36.508(a).

28. The Simi's must be, but is not, in compliance with the ADA and ADAAG.

29. The Property must be, but is not, in compliance with the ADA and ADAAG.

30. Plaintiff has attempted to, and has to the extent possible, accessed the Simi's and the Property in his capacity as a customer of the Simi's and Property and as an independent advocate for the disabled, but could not fully do so because of his disabilities resulting from the physical barriers to access, dangerous conditions and ADA violations that exist at the Simi's and Property that preclude and/or limit his access to the Simi's and Property and/or the goods, services, facilities, privileges, advantages and/or

accommodations offered therein, including those barriers, conditions and ADA violations more specifically set forth in this Complaint.

31. Plaintiff intends to visit the Simi's and Property again in the very near future as a customer in order to utilize all of the goods, services, facilities, privileges, advantages and/or accommodations commonly offered at the Simi's and Property and as an independent advocate for the disabled, but will be unable to fully do so because of his disability and the physical barriers to access, dangerous conditions and ADA violations that exist at the Simi's and Property that preclude and/or limit his access to the Simi's and Property and/or the goods, services, facilities, privileges, advantages and/or accommodations offered therein, including those barriers, conditions and ADA violations more specifically set forth in this Complaint.

32. Defendants have discriminated against Plaintiff (and others with disabilities) by denying his access to, and full and equal enjoyment of the goods, services, facilities, privileges, advantages and/or accommodations of the Simi's and Property, as prohibited by, and by failing to remove architectural barriers as required by, 42 U.S.C. § 12182(b)(2)(A)(iv).

33. Defendants will continue to discriminate against Plaintiff and others with disabilities unless and until Defendants are compelled to remove all physical barriers that exist at the Simi's and Property, including those specifically set forth herein, and make the Simi's and Property accessible to and usable by Plaintiff and other persons with disabilities.

34. A specific list of unlawful physical barriers, dangerous conditions and

ADA violations which Plaintiff experienced and/or observed that precluded and/or limited Plaintiff's access to the Simi's and Property and the full and equal enjoyment of the goods, services, facilities, privileges, advantages and accommodations of the Simi's and Property include, but are not limited to:

**(a) ACCESSIBLE ELEMENTS:**

- (i) The ground surfaces of the accessible parking space near Unit 223B have vertical rises in excess of  $\frac{1}{4}$  (one quarter) inch in height, are not stable or slip resistant, have broken or unstable surfaces or otherwise fail to comply with Section 302, 303 and 502.4 of the 2010 ADAAG standards. This violation made it dangerous and difficult for Plaintiff to access the units of the Property.
- (ii) The access aisle to the accessible parking space near Unit 223B is not level due to the presence of an accessible ramp in the access aisle in violation of section 502.4 of the 2010 ADAAG standards. This violation made it dangerous and difficult for Plaintiff to exit and enter their vehicle while parked at the Property.
- (iii) The Property has an accessible ramp near Unit 223B with vertical rises due to a PVC pipe sticking out of the accessible ramp in violation of section 405.4 of the 2010 ADAAG standards. This violation made it dangerous and difficult for Plaintiff to access the units of the Property.
- (iv) The Property has an accessible ramp leading from the accessible parking space near Unit 223B to the accessible entrances with a slope exceeding 1:12



in violation of section 405.2 of the 2010 ADAAG standards. This violation made it dangerous and difficult for Plaintiff to access the units of the Property.

(v) There is an excessive vertical rise at the top of the accessible ramp near Unit 223B in violation of Section 303.2 and 405.4 of the 2010 ADAAG standards. This violation made it dangerous and difficult for Plaintiff to access public features of the Property.

(vi) Due to a failure implement a proper policy of maintenance, there is sand and debris at the base of the accessible ramp near Unit 223B. As a result, the ground surfaces of the accessible ramp near Unit 223B are not stable or slip resistant, have broken or unstable surfaces or otherwise fail to comply with Section 302, 303 and 405.4 of the 2010 ADAAG standards. This violation made it dangerous and difficult for Plaintiff to access the units of the Property.

(vii) There is an accessible parking space in the corner of the Property (near units 115, 117, 201 and 205), where there are three accessible parking spaces, that are missing a proper identification sign in violation of section 502.6 of the 2010 ADAAG standards. This violation made it difficult for Plaintiff to locate an accessible parking space.

(viii) There is an excessive vertical rise at the base of the accessible ramp, near the three accessible parking spaces near units 115, 117, 201 and 205, in violation of Section 303.2 and 405.4 of the 2010 ADAAG standards. This violation made it dangerous and difficult for Plaintiff to access public features of the Property.

- (ix) The accessible ramp near the three accessible parking spaces near units 115, 117, 201 and 205 has side flares with a slope in excess of 1:10 in violation of section 406.3 of the 2010 ADAAG standards. This violation made it dangerous and difficult for Plaintiff to access the units of the Property.
- (x) Due to an excessive vertical rise, ranging from one to three inches, leading from the accessible ramp near the three accessible parking spaces near units 115, 117, 201 and 205, the Property lacks an accessible route from these accessible parking spaces in violation of section 208.3.1 of the 2010 ADAAG standards. This violation made it difficult for Plaintiff to access the units of the Property.
- (xi) The Property lacks an accessible route from the accessible parking space near Unit 101 to the accessible entrance of the Property in violation of section 208.3.1 of the 2010 ADAAG standards. This violation made it difficult for Plaintiff to access the units of the Property.
- (xii) The to-go/take-out counter in Simi's is lacking any portion of the counter that has a maximum height of 36 (thirty-six) inches from the finished floor in violation of section 904.4 of the 2010 ADAAG standards, all portions of the to-go/take-out counter exceed 36 (thirty-six) inches in height from the finished floor. This violation made it difficult for Plaintiff to properly transact business at the Property.
- (xiii) Defendants fail to adhere to a policy, practice and procedure to ensure that all facilities are readily accessible to and usable by disabled individuals.

**(b) SIMI'S RESTROOMS:**

- (i) The door to the restrooms has a maximum clear width below 32 (thirty-two) inches in violation of section 404.2.3 of the 2010 ADAAG standards. This made it difficult for Plaintiff and/or any disabled individual to safely utilize the restroom facilities.
- (ii) The restrooms lack signage in compliance with sections 216.8 and 703 of the 2010 ADAAG standards. This made it difficult for Plaintiff and/or any disabled individual to locate accessible restroom facilities.
- (iii) The actionable mechanism of the paper towel dispenser in the restrooms is located outside the prescribed vertical reach ranges set forth in section 308.2.1 of the 2010 ADAAG standards. This made it difficult for Plaintiff and/or any disabled individual to safely utilize the restroom facilities.
- (iv) The door exiting the restroom lacks a proper minimum maneuvering clearance, due to the proximity of the door hardware to the adjacent wall, in violation of section 404.2.4 of the 2010 ADAAG standards. This made it difficult for Plaintiff and/or any disabled individual to safely utilize the restroom facilities.
- (v) Restrooms have a vanity sink with inadequate knee and toe clearance in violation of section 306 of the 2010 ADAAG standards. This made it difficult for Plaintiff and/or any disabled individual to safely utilize the restroom facilities.

- (vi) The accessible toilet stall door is too narrow (less than 32 inches) and violates section 604.8.1.2 of the 2010 ADAAG standards. This made it difficult for the Plaintiff and/or any disabled individual to safely utilize the restroom facilities.
- (vii) The accessible toilet stall door is not self-closing and violates section 604.8.2.1 of the 2010 ADAAG standards. This made it difficult for the Plaintiff and/or any disabled individual to safely utilize the restroom facilities.
- (viii) The accessible toilet stall door swings into the clear floor space required by the stall and violates section 604.8.1.2 of the 2010 ADAAG standards. This made it difficult for the Plaintiff and/or any disabled individual to safely utilize the restroom facilities.
- (ix) The accessible toilet stall lacks the required size and turning clearance as required in section 604.8.1.1 of the 2010 ADAAG standards. This violation made it difficult for Plaintiff and/or any disabled individual to utilize the restroom.
- (x) The grab bars/handrails adjacent to the commode are missing and violate section 604.5 of the 2010 ADAAG standards. This made it difficult for Plaintiff and/or any disabled individual to safely utilize the restroom facilities.
- (xi) There is an unbeveled vertical rise exceeding  $\frac{1}{2}$  (one-half) inch at the threshold to the door leading to the restrooms in violation of section 404.2.5 of the 2010 ADAAG standards. This made it difficult for Plaintiff to safely utilize the restroom facilities.

35. The violations enumerated above may not be a complete list of the barriers, conditions or violations encountered by Plaintiff and/or which exist at the Simi's and Property.

36. Plaintiff requires an inspection of Simi's and Property in order to determine all of the discriminatory conditions present at the Simi's and Property in violation of the ADA.

37. The removal of the physical barriers, dangerous conditions and ADA violations alleged herein is readily achievable and can be accomplished and carried out without significant difficulty or expense. 42 U.S.C. § 12182(b)(2)(A)(iv); 42 U.S.C. § 12181(9); 28 C.F.R. § 36.304.

38. All of the violations alleged herein are readily achievable to modify to bring the Simi's and Property into compliance with the ADA.

39. Upon information and good faith belief, the removal of the physical barriers and dangerous conditions present at the Simi's and Property is readily achievable because the nature and cost of the modifications are relatively low.

40. Upon information and good faith belief, the removal of the physical barriers and dangerous conditions present at the Simi's and Property is readily achievable because Defendants have the financial resources to make the necessary modifications.

41. Upon information and good faith belief, the Simi's and Property have been altered since 2010.

42. In instances where the 2010 ADAAG standards do not apply, the 1991 ADAAG standards apply, and all of the alleged violations set forth herein can be

modified to comply with the 1991 ADAAG standards.

43. Plaintiff is without adequate remedy at law, is suffering irreparable harm, and reasonably anticipates that he will continue to suffer irreparable harm unless and until Defendants are required to remove the physical barriers, dangerous conditions and ADA violations that exist at the Simi's and Property, including those alleged herein.

44. Plaintiff's requested relief serves the public interest.

45. The benefit to Plaintiff and the public of the relief outweighs any resulting detriment to Defendants.

46. Plaintiff's counsel is entitled to recover its reasonable attorney's fees and costs of litigation from Defendants pursuant to 42 U.S.C. §§ 12188 and 12205.

47. Pursuant to 42 U.S.C. § 12188(a), this Court is provided authority to grant injunctive relief to Plaintiff, including the issuance of an Order directing Defendants to modify the Simi's and Property to the extent required by the ADA.

WHEREFORE, Plaintiff prays as follows:

- (a) That the Court find SRI in violation of the ADA and ADAAG;
- (b) That the Court find Pointnorth in violation of the ADA and ADAAG;
- (c) That the Court issue a permanent injunction enjoining Defendants from continuing their discriminatory practices;
- (d) That the Court issue an Order requiring Defendants to (i) remove the physical barriers to access and (ii) alter the subject Simi's to make it readily accessible to and useable by individuals with disabilities to the extent required by the ADA;

- (e) That the Court award Plaintiff his reasonable attorneys' fees, litigation expenses and costs; and
- (f) That the Court grant such further relief as deemed just and equitable in light of the circumstances.

Dated: March 15, 2019.

Respectfully submitted,

/s/ Dennis R. Kurz

Dennis R. Kurz

*Attorney-in-Charge for Plaintiff*

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